

MORE NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF THE NEPAL VALLEY

BY

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The following notes are additions and corrections to the lists of birds I published in the *journal*.¹ Since the lists were made we have lived more than 6 years in the Valley, and all possible weekends (alas too few!) are spent camping on Sheopuri or Godavari. During the monsoon of course such camps are not possible because of the leeches, but during the rest of the year we are out as much as possible. I have also collected birds, particularly willow-warblers and wagtails, both of which are a fascinating study here owing to the numbers of different races which pass through on the migrations.

I have kept careful records of the song periods of the Valley birds and prepared a chart of these, after the model of those prepared by Mr. H. G. Alexander and published in the 'Handbook of British Birds'. I have found these very valuable in England, and consider it would be a good idea if readers would send in similar charts for different parts of India.

I append charts of arrival and departure dates for the various migrant birds of the Valley.

The building of a motor road to India has opened up new country, particularly sugar cane fields at about 3,000 ft. This has added new birds to my list. I look forward to the time when the road will be completed and the terai with its swarming bird population within a few hours' drive by car.

Parus major nipalensis (Hodgson) : Nepal Grey Tit.

Though not normally found in the valley occasionally there is an invasion of these birds, and I saw a number during the winter of '51, and during March and April of both '52 and '53.

Parus spilonotus Blyth : Blackspotted Yellow Tit.

My previous record of this bird must have been a mistake. I have never seen it since.

Sylviparus modestus Burton : Yellow-browed Tit.

These little tits are very common on the hills about 7-9,000 ft. They are acrobatic as all tits. They seem to feed almost entirely on the pupae of the *Tortrix* moth or something similar which are found in the curled-up leaves all over the trees here. I have watched them collecting hundreds from infested leaves, and they must do a great deal of good. In appearance and habits they are very like a *phylloscopus*, and have a thin shrill *zee-zi zee-zi zee-zi* note uttered endlessly in April. For the rest of the year they are rather silent.

¹ 'Some notes on Birds of the Nepal Valley', *JBNHS*, 48 : 695-719, 'More Bird Notes from Nepal Valley.' *JBNHS*, 49 : 784-5.

Garrulax caerulatus (Hodgson) : Greysided Laughing-Thrush.

I have found this bird really very common on Sheopuri and Phul Chok, at 8,000 ft. and above, in summer. They make a great disturbance when feeding on the ground, hurling earth and dead leaves in all directions with the vigour of a puppy digging for rats. They have a delightful liquid whistle. In winter they are found at Godavari.

Garrulax rufogularis (Gould) : Rufouschinned Laughing-Thrush.

Uncommon but found sparingly all over the lower hills up to 6,000 ft. It has a very beautiful whistle. Found both in dense jungle and thin scrub at such places as Phar Ping.

Garrulax striatus Vigors : Striated Laughing-Thrush.

One of the commonest of the laughing-thrushes but only in dense jungle. At Pokhara they were very common up to 8,500 ft. They are often found at fruiting trees in company with green and Speckled Wood Pigeons.

Stachyris nigriceps Blyth : Blackthroated Babbler.

Rather scarce, but small flocks often seen at Godavari. I have not yet succeeded in getting a specimen. The call is peculiar, a single note followed by a trill which sounds like a small bell being rung faster and faster, then stopping abruptly.

Stachyris chrysaea Blyth : Goldenheaded Babbler.

We found this bird at Pokhara at 8,000 ft., but have not seen one in the Valley.

Pellorneum ruficeps Swainson : Spotted Babbler.

Very common in the terai ; I have found them scarce in the Valley, though seen occasionally in Goucher woods during the monsoon and all the year on the lower slopes of Nagar Jung.

Alcippe castaneiceps (Hodgson) : Chestnut-headed Babbler.

I previously recorded this little babbler as scarce which it certainly is not. On the higher parts of Sheopuri, Phul Chok and the inner hills from 7-9,000 ft. it is very common indeed. It has a rather distinctive churring purr, which can be very soft, or loud and harsh.

Pnoepyga pusilla Hodgson : Lesser Scalybellied Wren-Babbler.

These tiny wrens are common in the Valley especially in dense scrub on steep hillsides. I had spent much time watching them but always failed to get a specimen. They have a maddening habit of appearing just under one's feet, where to shoot would be to blow them to pieces. They then dash into dense cover and remain invisible though the moving leaves all round them give away their presence. Dr. Fleming very kindly gave me a specimen which he shot at 8,000 ft. on Phulchok. They are common at Godavari and Nagar Jung, at about 5,000 ft. and upto 8,000.

Pnoepyga albiventer Kinnear : Larger Scalybreasted Wren-Babbler.

This little bird is, I think, much scarcer than the last and found mostly at higher elevations. Like the last species I had failed to get a specimen, but was able to examine a couple shot by Dr. Fleming high on Phulchok,

one golden, the other white-breasted. The colour of the underparts is difficult to see in the field, but I think the bird with a white breast is the commoner variety here.

Siva strigula Hodgson : Stripethroated Siva.

Abundant all over the hills from 6-11,000 ft. Down to the Valley in winter. The display of this bird in spring is most amusing to watch. I have not seen it described anywhere so include it here. The birds collect into flocks of anything from 15 to 50 birds, and these break up into pairs, but the pairs all remain together in the same tree. The 2 birds of each pair sit very close together, tails on opposite sides of the branch and separated by at least 6 inches from the next pair. They then alternately bow and stretch their heads and necks up to the fullest extent, the feathers of the head and neck fluffed out. They frequently reverse their positions on the branch, and both birds always do this at the same instant as if at a signal so that they never both have their tails the same side of the branch even for a second. The whole thing is like an elaborate dance and will continue for an hour or more without a break. Each pair normally take no notice of any other birds in the tree, but I have occasionally seen one bird leave its partner and commence to bow to the nearest bird of the next pair, this leads to much scuffling and disturbance but the pairs soon re-form, although whether in the original order I am not quite sure. If one pair should leave the tree and fly off all the others follow and the whole thing starts again in another tree, though this is sometimes the signal for the whole thing to break up. All the time this is going on the birds keep up a continual churring note with an occasional sweet whistle. It can be quite deafening when a large number are displaying close to one. The song proper, a sweet 3-syllable whistle, is not heard during the display in fact not until the birds have separated into pairs in preparation for nest building. I have seen this display take place on Sheopuri at 8,000 ft. in April and on the Gandak-Kosi watershed at 11,000 ft. in May. The one essential seems to be a large population of these birds. 8 pairs is the smallest number I have seen doing it. Where they are few, the pairs seem to form without any fuss.

Siva ignotincta (Hodgson) : Redtailed Minla.

Scarce but found sparingly on Sheopuri above 7,000 ft. in summer. In breeding condition in May.

Cutia nipalensis Hodgson : Nepal Cutia.

Commoner than I at first thought. They keep much to the lanuginosa forest, where they range round the hillsides keeping to the same elevation, about 7,000 ft.

Pteruthius melanotis melanotis Hodgson : Chestnut-throated Shrike babbler.

This bird also is commoner than I used to think. It is usually solitary in a large flock of tits, phylloscopi and particularly of Bluewinged Sivas. I have never seen more than one bird in a flock of probably 30 to 50 other individuals. I think they breed on the ridges at 7-8,000 ft., where I have seen them in April and May, but spend the winters in such places as Godavari at 5,000 ft. Never away from forest.

Pteruthius xanthochloris Gray : Green Shrike-babbler.

This bird also is commoner than I had thought. The first one I saw was shot by Dr. Fleming. Since then I have seen a number, but they are very silent and unobtrusive, creeping about in dense jungle. They often perch along a branch instead of across it. I have never heard them utter a sound. Mostly at about 7-8,000 ft. throughout the year.

Aegithinia tiphia (L.): Iora.

I had previously recorded this bird as a monsoon visitor. Although this is correct for the Goucher area where I had previously observed them, they are found along the south side of Nagar Jung in Simal trees (*Bombax*) as early as March.

Cinclus pallasii (Temminck) : Brown Dipper.

These birds breed each year on the stream near the dam at Sundarikal. This year the nest was under the fall of water from the dam. When the water was flowing the parent birds had to fly through a curtain of water to reach the nest. When the reservoir was not full and the water was turned off, a good view of the nest was obtained. I much enjoyed watching the young birds leaving the nest on the 17th February.

Luscinia brunnea (Hodgson) : Indian Blue Chat.

Numbers of these birds nest on Sheopuri at 8,400 ft. They are in full song by the 28th April. They were still singing, though not nearly so much, on the 28th June.

Luscinia suecica (L.) : Bluethroat.

I had previously recorded this bird as a passage migrant. They are certainly very common on passage, but a few remain throughout the winter in the Valley. They are particularly partial to bean fields.

Luscinia pectoralis Gould : Himalayan Rubythroat.

Occasionally seen on passage and a few may remain throughout the winter, as the Common Rubythroat does.

Phoenicurus ochruros (S. G. Gmelin) : Black Redstart.

These go through rapidly on the spring migration. On 19-4-52 during an afternoon's ride through the fields I must have seen half a dozen individuals. Next day there were none. Some years I never see any.

Muscisylvia leucura Hodgson : Whitetailed Blue Robin.

In April and May these birds breed at about 8,000 ft. on Sheopuri. Generally near a stream, and always found in the same areas. I have not found a nest.

Saxicola caprata bicolor Sykes : Pied Bushchat.

Not usually seen in the Valley, but in 1953 I saw several birds on some bare eroded cliffs at the foot of Sheopuri. They are very common along the new road as soon as one drops to 3,000 ft.

Rhodophila ferrea (Gray) : Grey Bushchat.

Much commoner than I had supposed. Breeds on Sheopuri above 8,000 ft. and on all the inner ranges North of the Valley. It is one of the

earliest birds to sing in the morning, often heard before 4 a.m. By May 24th many had newly-fledged young sitting about, speckled and lumpy, on low branches. Others were still feeding young in the nest.

Turdus m. albocinctus Royle : Whitecollared blackbird.

I think that none of these birds remain to breed on Sheopuri or Phulchok or anywhere below 10,000 ft. Very common in March ; I have seen none after the 4th April.

Turdus rubrocanus Gray : Greyheaded Thrush.

Very uncommon here. I have seen them only twice at about 7,000 ft. in winter. On the other hand they were common on the hills north of Pokhara.

Oreocincla mollissima Blyth : Plainbacked Mountain Thrush.

Quite common during the winter, mostly on the ridges where I have seen it at 8,000 ft. in coldest weather with snow on the ground, but it occasionally comes down to 5,000 ft. at Godavari. This I think is the thrush which breeds and sings at 12,000 ft. on the Gandak-Kosi watershed.

Monticola cinclorhyncha (Vigors) : Blueheaded Rock Thrush.

Not a passage migrant as I had previously thought, but a summer visitor breeding on Nagar Jang and in a few other places, but rather local. Young birds are seen all over the south side of Nagar Jung from about the end of June.

Prunella strophia (Blyth) : Rufousbreasted Accentor.

A few birds seen each year on the ridges north of the Valley at about 7,000 ft. On the inner hills north of the Sheopuri lekh they are very common in winter, and breed at 12,000 ft. on the same hills.

Siphia parva hyperythra (Cabanis) : Kashmir Redbreasted Flycatcher

This flycatcher with black bands bordering the red breast was seen once in my garden on April 10th 1953. I am surprised to find one so far east on the migration.

Siphia parva albicilla (Pallas) : Eastern Redbreasted Flycatcher.

Winters in large numbers in the Valley. I am puzzled over the reason why birds with red breasts are seen only in spring during the migration. I read that Mr. Betts found the same thing as stated in his 'Birds of Coorg'. In the Nilgiris I have seen red-breasted birds all winter ; perhaps the western race. This year I did in fact see a bird with a very red throat at Godavari on 30th Jan., but this is the only one seen during 6 winters here. I have also seen very few during the autumn migration. Where do the adult males winter ?

Hemichelidon cinereiceps (Hodgson) : Ferruginous Flycatcher.

Scarce but seen a few times at about 8,000 ft. A breeding male was shot at that height on Sheopuri on May 17th.

Muscicapa amabilis (Deignan) : Rustybreasted Flycatcher.

A fairly common bird during the winter and early spring. Sir Norman Kinnear tells me that males frequently breed in female plumage and certainly one sees a dozen 'females' for one adult-plumaged male.

Muscicapa hyperythra (Blyth): Whitefronted Blue Flycatcher.

Much commoner than I had at first supposed. They arrive towards the end of April and move up into the hills at 7-8,000 ft. Last year we found a nest. Both parents were building on April 25. The nest was built into a lump of moss suspended from a tree about 20 ft. from the ground, and so looked like a hanging nest with a dome. I should think this must be an unusual situation. We only saw the female incubating, but did not have time to watch for long. Both parents were feeding young on the 26th May. The 2 young birds had their heads sticking out of the hole. They had a very mealy appearance, and one—I suppose a young male—already had a very distinct white bar across the front of his face.

Nitidula hodgsoni (Moore): Pigmy Flycatcher.

Rather scarce, but as it keeps to dense forest and is very unobtrusive, it may well be often overlooked. I have only seen them from Phulchok at about 7-8,000 ft. in summer, down to valley level in winter. They are sometimes in mixed flocks with *phylloscopi*.

Muscicapula leucomelanura (Hodgson): Slatyblue Flycatcher.

Muscicapula tricolor. Since the opening of the new road we have found these flycatchers common in winter in the sugar cane fields at 3,000 ft. or so. In summer they are much more sparingly distributed in the higher hills.

Niltava sundara (Hodgson): Rufousbellied Niltava.

Quite common in thick jungle in summer, in more open country in winter. I have heard it utter a squeaky grating song, certainly not a fine song. It is much like that of the Small Niltava (*N. macgrigoriæ*) also common here. The Large Niltava (*N. grandis*) although found in deep forest on very steep hillsides is much the rarest of the three.

Pericrocotus ethologus (Bangs & Phillips): Longtailed Minivet.

All birds that I have shot have been of this species. I do not know if the Shortbilled Minivet (*P. brevirostris*) is found here also.

Pericrocotus flammeus (Forster): Orange Minivet.

Quite a common bird from 5-9,000 ft. but only in forest. It does not fly through the gardens of the Valley as the last species does.

Dicrurus aeneus (Vieillot): Bronzed Drongo.

This drongo is common on Nagar Jung, but I have seen it nowhere else. It is not found above about 5,000 ft. They are very active spritely birds, and it is a joy to watch them with their brilliant iridescent plumage flashing in the sun as they dive and swoop through the jungle.

Phylloscopus affinis (Tickell): Tickell's Willow-Warbler.

Common passage migrant during March-April, and September. Only on hills; I have not seen it in the Valley.

Phylloscopus pulcher Blyth: Orangebarred Willow-Warbler.

Common on the high hills, especially in *Quercus semecarpifolia* forest from October to March. In very cold weather they come down to the

Valley at 5,000 ft. where there is forest. They move on to the higher inner hills above 9,500 ft. at the end of March and first week of April. I do not think any remain to breed on Sheopuri and Phulchok.

Phylloscopus inornatus inornatus (Blyth) : Yellowbrowed Willow-Warbler.

Not very common, but a fair number pass through in the autumn and spring. I have obtained them in October–November and end March–April. They can be distinguished sometimes in the field by their notes. Although they utter the double *chee-wee* like *humei*, they have also a single note *wheet* as described by Dr. Ticehurst, and this is uttered frequently enough to be a good field character. I have never heard this bird or *humei* utter any song.

Phylloscopus inornatus humei (Brooks) : Hume's Willow-Warbler.

The common willow-warbler of the Valley in winter ; abundant in every sort of country except deep forest. They arrive in October and spread all over the Valley in every garden and clump of trees, and on the open hillsides up to 7,000 ft. there seems to be a bird in every isolated bush or tree. They remain till the end of April.

Phylloscopus proregulus chloronotus (Gray) : Yellowrumped Willow-Warbler.

Very common in winter in the valley, and I have found fair numbers in breeding condition on the ridges round the Valley at 7–9,000 ft. at the end of May, so I have no doubt they breed here and move down to valley level in winter. They appear in the Godavari forest at the end of October and leave by the 12th of April, but they do not come into our gardens until November. They are always in little flocks during the winter. They commence their feeble but pleasing little tinkling song in the middle of February and continue to sing until at least the end of May.

Phylloscopus maculipennis (Blyth) : Greyfaced Willow-Warbler.

These birds also breed on the ridges round the Valley as we have found them there in breeding condition on 28th May and my husband shot one on 28th June, 8,000 ft. They come down to the Valley in winter and are then fairly common at Sundarijal and Godavari. They do not come into gardens and are not found much below 5,000 ft.

Phylloscopus magnirostris Blyth : Largebilled Willow-Warbler.

We have shot this bird in breeding condition on Sheopuri in forest at the end of April, but I have only seen one or two, and they might still be on migration for higher hills. We did not find them on the Gandak-Kosi watershed in May. In August they appear in large numbers in the gardens of the Valley and remain there for about a month. Their unmistakable note is then heard every morning in our garden and they also sometimes sing a little in September. They are the only willow-warblers seen in the Valley during the monsoon. I imagine they breed in thick forest on Sheopuri and Phulchok and move down into the Valley after breeding. I have never seen or heard them in the Valley in spring, and they cannot be easily overlooked with their very striking song. Earliest date in Valley 8th August ; latest September 9th.

Phylloscopus trochiloides trochiloides (Sundevall) : Dull-green Willow-Warbler.

We found these birds very common on the Gandak-Kosi watershed at 9,500–12,000 ft. Those shot were in breeding condition. I do not think any remain to breed on the hills round the Valley, nor are they ever found in the Valley in winter. I think they must pass through rapidly on migration as I have only obtained very few then—in our garden 17th and 23rd September and 7th Oct. ; on hills at 7,000 ft. 30th April.

Phylloscopus trochiloides viridanus Blyth : The Greenish Willow-Warbler.

This bird is an abundant passage migrant from early March until the middle of May. During late April and May they sing continuously. I find the call note indistinguishable from that of *P. inornatus humei*, but I have collected carefully all winter and have never obtained one of these birds between mid-November and March. They pass through quite rapidly during the autumn migration and do not linger as in the spring. Last date 20th May.

Phylloscopus trochiloides ludlowi Whistler.

A single bird shot on Sheopuri at 8,000 ft. on May 31st and in breeding condition was identified by Sir Norman Kinnear as an intergrade between this race and *P. t. trochiloides*. This is the only one I have seen, and presume a straggler from further west. As it was in forest and fairly low, it would in any case not overlap with *trochiloides* which is not found in summer below 10,000 ft. and usually in more open country—small bush type of country.

Phylloscopus trochiloides nitidus Blyth : Green Willow-Warbler.

A very common passage migrant in spring, but never seen in autumn. They begin to arrive in the Valley in the last days of March, but are not common till the middle of April, when hundreds go through, all singing with a bubbling vehemence unusual in willow-warblers on passage. They are found everywhere, in gardens, orchards, trees along river banks and on the hills in light jungle to 8,000 ft. at least. By the first week of May most are gone, but I have seen a few on 5th May in our garden. The call note is indistinguishable from that of other races of the *trochiloides* group, but the song is different and could be easily recognised by anyone with a good ear.

Phylloscopus reguloides reguloides (Blyth) : Blyth's Willow-Warbler.

A common breeding bird on the hills round the Nepal Valley. They arrive early in March and are then found from 4,000 ft. but only in dense forest. By the end of April they are established in their breeding haunts at about 8,000 ft. and are singing lustily. The song is distinctive—a continuous little trill of 9 or 10 notes *Chi-ti-chi-ti-chi-ti-chi-ti-chee*. Sometimes the last note also is double.

I have never obtained a specimen of *P. subaffinis* collected here by Dr. Ripley, but have seen what I believe to be this bird on Nagar Jung and at Godavari in April and November. I may possibly be confusing it with *affinis*.

Seicercus poliogenys (Blyth) : Greycheeked Flycatcher-Warbler.

Very scarce. A few seen in our garden during November amongst other warblers.

S. castaneiceps (Gray). Chestnutheaded Flycatcher-Warbler.

Not very common but odd ones are seen in winter at Godavari and on the hills amongst flocks of willow-warblers, etc.; also sometimes in our garden.

Abrornis schisticeps (Hodgson) : Blackfaced Flycatcher-Warbler.

Not nearly as uncommon as I had thought, but local. In summer they are really common on Sheopuri at 7-8,000 ft. where I have frequently seen them in April and May in small flocks of generally 4 or 5 birds, probably family parties. Presumably breeding takes place early in the year. They seem to have an affinity with *Sylviparus modestus*, as these two species are nearly always found together. In the winter they form part of the huge mixed flocks which wander round the hillsides and are sometimes seen at Godavari. But there are not usually more than 1 or 2 of this species, and they then seem scarce.

Neornis flavolivaceus Blyth : Aberrant Bush-warbler.

This bird is absolutely abundant round Pokhara at all elevations from 2,500 to 6,000 ft., but I had never seen it in the Valley until the opening of the new road enabled us to get down to sugar cane fields at 3,000 ft. There this bird is certainly very common in winter.

Horeites brunnifrons (Hodgson) : Rufouscapped Bush-warbler.

This bird breeds on the hills north of the Nepal Valley at 10,000-12,000 ft. and one would expect it to be common in the Valley in winter, but I have never found it here, only occasionally on the hills in spring on passage. On the other hand we found this little bird also very common round Pokhara at 4,000 ft. in November. I suppose the grass conditions in the Valley are somehow not right for it.

Prinia criniger criniger (Hodgson) : Brown Hill-warbler.

Very common on grassy hills round the Valley, but local. It is very common above Pharping and on open slopes of Sheopuri. In the monsoon when the grass is long it breeds on Nagar Jung. They must breed late as we have seen parents with just-fledged tailless young on October 4th.

Prinia gracilis Franklin : Franklin's Wren-warbler.

Another species added to my list by the opening of the road. Never seen in the Valley; it is abundant in sugar cane at 3,000 ft., below the Valley.

Tesia cyaniventer Hodgson. Slatybellied Wren.

Once these birds' habitat is known they are found to be very common. They frequent the dense low undergrowth round small mountain streams running through forest. I have seen them mostly about 5-6000 ft.

Oligura castaneocoronata (Burton). Chestnut-headed Wren.

Not quite as common as the last species, but found in the same situations and often in company with it. I have found it up to 7000 ft. I must

say that from the field naturalist's point of view these birds seem much more happily placed with the wrens than with the warblers.

Pyrrhula erythrocephala Vigors : Redheaded Bullfinch.

Small flocks seen on Sheopuri in April and May at 8,000 ft.

Pyrrhula nipalensis (Hodgson) : Brown Bullfinch.

Common on both Sheopuri and Phulchok in winter and as late as early May, but I doubt if any remain to breed here.

Spinus tibetanus (Hume) : Tibetan Siskin.

This bird must, I think, be extending its range. For the last two years numbers have been seen in the Valley. It is however very local, and I have only seen them at Godavari where they frequent the huge alders growing by the stream. This year, on 27th and 28th Feb., these trees were literally swarming with them and the twittering they made was so loud that from a distance it sounded almost like starlings going to roost. After watching them for some time I began to count, the main flock had passed on, but I counted 58 stragglers. There must have been several hundred birds. I did not see any after the first week in March.

Carpodacus rodochroa (Vigors) : Pinkbrowed Rosefinch.

Very common on Sheopuri in winter and early spring when the rhododendrons are out. I have not seen them below 8,000 ft. They have all left by the middle of April.

Carpodacus erythrinus (Pallas) : Common Rosefinch.

Very common from March until the middle of May. They swarm in our garden on the *Prunus puddum* trees whose fruit is ripe then. Nearly all are the race *erythrinus* I think, and have only the upper breast rosy. I have seen only one bird shot in the Valley with the rosy extending as far as the abdomen.

Uroloncha striata acuticauda (Hodgson) : Hodgson's Munia.

I had always thought this bird to be a summer visitor only to the Valley, but this year ('53) large numbers remained in my garden all December and January. During this time they built huge untidy straw nests in which numbers roosted at night. On the new road we found them very common round sugar cane fields, so their migrations are obviously only of a very local nature.

Emberiza aureola Pallas : Yellowbreasted Bunting.

I had thought this bird to be a passage migrant only, but find that large flocks winter in the Valley. They are also very common in fields at 3,000 ft. along the new road. They begin to change into breeding dress in the middle of February and are in full plumage by the middle of March. A flock of these birds feeding in a ploughed field is a most pleasant sight, the yellow and brown bodies and flicker of white in the wings gives life to the winter landscape.

Delichon nipalensis Horsf. & Moore : Nepal Martin.

Not often seen in the Valley but common over the low grassy passes in the inner hills. I think they breed on the cliffs above Golbu at 7,000 ft.

Ripara paludicola (Vieillot) : Sand Martin.

The common Sand Martin of the Valley. The breeding season must be an extended one as I have seen them flying in and out of the nest-holes as early as February and as late as May. These holes are in the mud cliffs which border the river beds, and are often in a crumbling condition. Some of the holes are very large and are obviously used year after year. My previous record of *Riparia riparia* in the Valley must have been a mistake.

Motacilla alba L. White Wagtail.

This wagtail is really a fascinating study as no less than 6 races are found here at various times. I have collected carefully during the last two years and kept notes of all arrival and departure dates. It is impossible, I think, to distinguish young birds in the field and even in the hand they are difficult, but I think I can now spot the adult birds with fair certainty. The chief difficulty is in winter when the black-backed forms may lose the black back for a grey one. However, a large proportion retain the black back and even in those which do not, the grey is distinctly darker in the black-backed forms. They may sometimes be mistaken in the field, but are always distinguishable in the hand. The following are the races which I have observed and collected here.

M. a. personata Gould : Masked Wagtail.

Certainly the rarest form seen here, a mere straggler on the migrations. I have not seen above 6 birds in 3 winters.

M. a. ocularis Swinhoe : Streaked Wagtail.

Tolerably common on migration. I have only seen one in the autumn, in October, but they begin to appear in early March, and then for the next 2 months a few are generally seen any day on the river bank in company with Indian White Wagtails. Earliest date March 12th; latest April 25th. They can be picked out fairly easily in the field, the dark eye-streak being clearly seen with glasses in all plumages.

M. a. dukhunensis Sykes. Indian White Wagtail.

Probably the commonest of all the wagtails. Although less common on sandbanks in the rivers than the 2 black-backed forms, they spread widely over the ploughed fields and the total population must be enormous. They start arriving about 22nd September and are common from the 28th of the month. They are the last to leave in spring, being common to the 30th April, and a few are seen till the 6th of May. During April the resident birds are augmented by large flocks of passage migrants.

M. a. baicalensis Swinhoe : Swinhoe's White Wagtail.

This is the most difficult of the white wagtails to distinguish in the field. With young birds it is impossible, and adults are difficult. I am much indebted to Mrs. Lushington who examined numbers in the British Museum and sent me her notes. I have since collected several which have been identified as *baicalensis*. The chief thing to notice is the greater extent of white in the wing; and the general appearance of the bird, especially in breeding plumage, is altogether whiter. A few of these birds winter here, but they become much commoner in spring. For a

short time in March they are as common in river beds as the White Wagtail. They are less common in April and very few are seen after the 20th of the month. Last date 30th April.

M. a. alboides Hodgson : Hodgson's White Wagtail.

This bird starts arriving on 22nd and 23rd of September and by the end of the month is abundant all along the river banks. It is not seen very much away from the rivers, though odd ones are present in ploughed fields, and numbers will swarm in a flooded area. They are abundant all winter, but start to leave early and the numbers decrease rapidly after 20th March, by the end of the month all are gone. Only a single odd one is seen occasionally during the first fortnight of April. As these birds breed in the Himalayas I suppose their breeding areas are habitable long before those which go to the far north.

M. a. leucopsis Gould : Whitefaced Wagtail.

This bird is also extremely common all winter and is the first to arrive, early birds appearing on 13th Sept., a week before the others. By the 20th they are abundant and remain so all winter. Like *alboides* they leave early, and by the end of March they are all gone, nor have I ever seen a single straggler in early April.

Motacilla flava L. Two races of this wagtail occur, though not in anything like the numbers of the last species.

M. flava beema (Sykes) : Indian Blueheaded Wagtail.

This bird is found in small numbers along the river banks and in fields all winter. They first arrive about 19th September. They are frequently seen with White and Yellowheaded Wagtails. About the middle of March large numbers of passage migrants augment the numbers of wintering birds, and for about a week they are very common feeding largely in fields of flowering mustard. They are all gone by the end of the month.

M. flava thunbergi Billberg : Greyheaded Wagtail.

A passage migrant only. This year there were about 30 birds in the dry bed of the Vishnumati on 29th and 30th April. Only 2 birds seen on 4th May and then no more. My husband was in the terai that week and he said he saw enormous flocks of these birds along the Kosi River on the same dates. A few days later he saw only one or two.

Motacilla citreola Pallas : Yellowheaded Wagtail.

Passage migrants, particularly in the autumn when numbers were seen in the rice fields along the Manora River on 6th September, the first wagtails to appear. They remained in large numbers throughout the month and a few were seen during the winter. I am not quite sure of the race although I think it is *calcarata* ; but I have a few skins and must check them on my next leave.

Anthus roseatus Blyth : Roseate Pipit.

This pipit breeds in large numbers on the hills above 10,000 ft. north of the Valley. It is abundant in the Valley all winter and even more so in the sugarcane fields at lower elevations. It is also very abundant on passage. Remains until early May.

Alauda gulgula Franklin : Little Skylark.

A common winter visitor arriving about Oct. 10th and spreading all over the ploughed fields. Their rich gurgling chirrup is a pleasant sound throughout the winter. I have never heard them sing here. They are common till the end of March and flocks were seen roosting in swampy fields as late as 21st April. On the bare hills north of Sheopuri I saw a small flock of about 8 birds on the 10th April, possibly on migration.

Aethopyga saturata (Hodgson): Blackbreasted Sunbird.

Quite common at Godavari. They leave for a couple of months in the coldest weather but are back and singing by the end of February. Always near forest.

Aethopyga nipalensis (Hodgson) : Nepal Sunbird.

Extremely abundant on all the ridges round the Valley at 7-9,000 ft. At first I confused it with Mrs. Gould's Sunbird, but although in the last few years I have examined all birds carefully with glasses and seen numbers shot, I have never seen a specimen of *Ac. gouldiae* and wonder if perhaps the 2 species do not occur in the same area? The 4 species *ignicauda*, *nipalensis*, *saturata* and *siparaja* are all found together in winter, feeding on flowering *Leucosceptrum canum* and later *Caryopteris*, but *gouldiae* is never found with them.

Pachygllossa melanozanthum Blyth : Yellowbellied Flowerpecker.

Seen occasionally in our garden and on the lower hills of Nagar Jung, and Pharping during the winter December to February.

lynx torquilla L. : Wryneck.

A passage migrant seen in gardens, and particularly in the lines of willows bordering the rivers, in September, October and March, April.

Cuculus poliocephalus Latham : Small Cuckoo.

Common on the ridges about 7,000 ft. and also at Godavari 5,000 ft. They arrive late and I have not heard the call, so like a cackling hen, before the end of April.

Cuculus sparveroides Vigors : Large Hawk-Cuckoo.

This is the cuckoo so common at 7-9,000 ft. which puzzled us for so long. The call is much pleasanter than that of the Common Hawk-Cuckoo, not having the piercing crescendo of the latter bird's call.

Surniculus lugubris dicruroides (Hodgson) : Drongo Cuckoo.

Fairly common in the Valley, but not heard much above 5,000 ft. My husband found it abundant and calling in the terai in early May, and I imagine we are on the extreme upper limit of its range.

Chalcites maculatus (Gmelin) : Emerald Cuckoo.

Seen only once, a small party in our garden on 7th September.

Megalaima haemacephala (Müller) : Coppersmith.

I had previously thought this bird to be only a monsoon visitor to the Valley, but find it is resident wherever banyan trees grow, that is, at Phar-

ping and at the village of Bara Nil Kanta at the foot of Sheopuri at 5,000 ft. It is here in the coldest winter.

Coracias benghalensis (L.) : Indian Roller.

Never seen in the Valley, but along the new road within a mile of the edge of the Valley, and less than 1,000 ft. below it is quite common.

Harpactes erythrocephalus (Gould) : Redheaded Trogon.

I found a pair of these lovely birds breeding at about 6,000 ft. up the Valley to the west of Godavari where a small stream runs through dense forest.

Ketupa zeylonensis leschenault (Temminck) : Brown Fish-Owl.

Common at Gowkarna. Last year they used to leave the forest and fly across to the bare slopes of Gowkarna hill at exactly the same time every evening. During the last fortnight of August it was 6.45 exactly. Sometimes only one bird, sometimes several, evidently a family party. We have also seen them at the foot of Nagar Jung and shot one there on October 4th.

Otus bakkamoena Pennant : Collared Scops Owl.

Common in the Valley. Its soft interrogative *Wut?* is heard almost throughout the year. It is very nocturnal and never calls before it is quite dark. In the light of a torch its eyes look quite red. It is a shy little bird but is occasionally seen by day, fast asleep in some dense shrubbery.

Otus spilocephalus (Blyth) : Spotted Scops Owl.

Common on all the hills where it calls for hours at night. At Godavari we hear it from February onwards. They are commonest from about 6-8,500 ft. The note *phew phew* rings out all night but ceases before dawn, and we have never succeeded in actually seeing one. Dr. Fleming obtained 2 on Phulchok by imitating the call and attracting it within range. He very kindly gave me one.

Glaucidium cuculoides (Vigors) : Barred Owlet.

Very common in jungle and on the edges of it, but never in gardens in the Valley. It is particularly common at Godavari and on Nagar Jung. The tameest of the owls and very diurnal. They do not call at night, but are very noisy at dawn and for a couple of hours after the sun is up. The call rather reminds me of a barbet. In winter I have seen them in bright sunlight catching insects on the ground in a small swamp at Godavari.

Glaucidium brodiei (Burton) : Pigmy Owlet.

Very common indeed on all the hills from 4-9,000 ft. Calls mostly by day and all day, and throughout the year, June and July being the only months when I have not heard them. They are not heard in the Valley away from jungle, although common on the edge of it.

Aquila chrysaëtos (L.) : Golden Eagle.

Golden Eagles are seen fairly often in the winter, sometimes in pairs flying over Nagar Jung. These are sight records only based entirely on the flight of the bird with wings raised above the back and very different indeed from the stiff vulture-like flight of the Steppe and Imperial eagles.

***Aquila heliaca* Savigny : Imperial Eagle.**

A very dark eagle almost purple black in colour with short vulture-like tail and broad stiff wings, the primaries very separated like the fingers of a hand, is seen often in January and February. I take it to be of this species.

***Aquila nipalensis* Hodgson : Steppe Eagle.**

The eagle with 2 wing bars, larger than the last bird and with slightly less stiff flight is very common in the Valley all winter, 3 or 4 often seen soaring together particularly over the broad part of the river before it cuts its way out of the Valley by the gorge of Chorbar. My husband shot one this winter, but I have not yet had a chance of comparing it with others in a museum, and all my identifications of eagles are rather doubtful.

***Hieraëtus pennatus* (Gmelin) : Booted Eagle.**

This is the only eagle of which I am certain (except for the common and unmistakable Black and Serpent eagles). This bird has been seen several times perched on one of the huge pines in our garden. It is here throughout the year, most eagles being merely winter visitors. Last June one perched in our garden was furiously attacked by 2 pairs of drongos which had nests in the garden. The eagle snapped at them furiously and I thought their end had come, but in the end the drongos were victorious and the splendid bird rose in disgust and sailed away.

***Pernis* sp. ?**

A honey buzzard is common here in winter between November and March. We also saw it frequently in Pokhara, but I have not been able to get a specimen and do not know what species or race it is.

***Accipiter virgatus affinis* Hodgson : Besra Sparrowhawk.**

Moderately common in our garden all the year, and one was shot last September while devouring a small bird.

***Columba pulchricollis* Blyth : Purple Wood Pigeon.**

Scarce. I have only seen them on the ridge of Sheopuri at 8,400 ft. A male shot 20th May was in breeding condition.

***Columba hodgsonii* Vigors : Speckled Wood Pigeon.**

This pigeon is really quite common. It wanders a great deal and appears wherever the various fruit are ripe in the jungle. Last March I watched one for some time gorging on the green berries of a wild olive. It was beside a path where wood-cutters were constantly passing. When they appeared the bird would freeze in whatever position it was sometimes almost upside down. Not one of the many coolies noticed this large bird within a few feet of their heads.

***Streptopelia decaocto* Frivaldszky : Ring Dove.**

Not normally seen in the Valley, but at the end of the monsoon flocks appear and gorge on the ripening rice.

***Arborophila torqueola* (Valenc.) : Common Hill Partridge.**

Not uncommon on the hills at about 8,000 ft. They are very secretive and I have watched them hiding under leaves and bushes when disturbed. A male shot on May 24th was in breeding condition.

Arborophila rufogularis (Blyth) : Rufousthroated Hill Partridge

This bird occupies the zone below the last and is commonest about 5-6000 ft.

Burhinus oedicnemus indicus (Salvadori) : Indian Stone-curlew

Seen once only in the Valley, 28th August. It was standing on our lawn after dark obviously bewildered in the glare of the headlights.

Sterna hirundo tibetana Saunders : Common Tern

Seen only during the autumn migration on the Manora River. Sometimes they remain a day or two when the river is in spate at the end of the monsoon. An immature bird shot on August 9th. Several seen early September.

Tringa glareola L. : Wood Sandpiper

A passage migrant common on both spring and autumn migrations. Usually 4 or 5 birds together, but I have seen an occasional solitary bird.

Tringa nebularia (Gunnerus) Greenshank

Seen only on the autumn migration, when it is fairly common from the end of August to the middle of September.

Philomachus pugnax (L.) : Ruff & Reeve

On passage in autumn. A number on the Manora on Sept. 16. 2 birds shot were both males, one in golden and one in grey plumage.

Erolia temminckii (Leisler) : Temminck's Stint

Common all winter on the Manora River and on the Bagmati where it widens before cutting its way out of the Valley. I have never seen it on the smaller rivers.

They arrive about the 8th August and for the next 3 weeks swarm all along the river banks, little flocks constantly rising with their purring twitter. By the end of August the main migration has passed on, but wintering birds remain. I have seen them until 17th May when they are in full breeding dress. They are therefore absent for less than 3 months.

Anhinga melanogaster Pennant : Indian Snake-bird

Seen only once soaring over the Valley after a severe dust storm, on 16th April. A Neophron vulture was soaring with it, both obviously storm driven as neither normally occurs in the Valley.

Anas querquedula L. : Garganey Teal

The common duck of the Valley in winter, though most are passage migrants, passing through in large numbers in September and early October. This year I saw 2 ducks in a small pool in the growing rice as early as August 1st. No more were seen until 7th September.

In the following charts I have divided the migrant birds into Summer and Winter Visitors and Passage Migrants. Many birds, of course, are both winter visitors and passage migrants. I have put them into whichever group they appear the most numerous.

SUMMER VISITORS

Species of bird	First dates	Last dates
<i>Luscinia brunnea</i> Blue Chat.	15-4-53, 27-3-54	
<i>Geokichla citrina</i> Orangeheaded Ground-thrush.	12-4-48, 8-5-49, 20-4-52, 2-5-53	26-9-52, 8-10-53
<i>Monticola cinclorhyncha</i> Blueheaded Rockthrush.	early April '53, 5-4-54	8-10-53
<i>Muscicapa sibirica</i> Sooty Flycatcher.	11-4-52, 19-4-53, 8-4-54	2-11-52, 1-11-53
<i>Muscicapa latirostris</i> Brown Flycatcher.	1-4-52, 27-4-54	20-9-53
<i>M. hyperythra</i> Whitefronted Blue Flycatcher.	22-4-51, 19-4-53	
<i>M. superciliaris</i> Whitebrowed Blue Flycatcher.	occasionally end February, early March	
<i>M. rubeculoides</i> Bluethroated Flycatcher.	11-4-48, 17-4-50, 22-4-53	20-9-53
<i>M. thalassina</i> Verditer Flycatcher.	25-3-48, 22-3-51, 16-3-52, 23-3-53, 6-3-54 (odd bird) main body 19-3-54	5-10-53
<i>Culicicapa ceylonensis</i> Greyheaded Flycatcher.	mid February, local migration a few miles below Valley	mid October
<i>Tersiphone paradisi</i> Paradise Flycatcher.	19-3-48, 4-4-52, 24-3-53, 26-3-54	12-9-48, 8-9-53
<i>Coracina melaschista</i> Dark Cuckoo-Shrike.	23-2-53, 27-2-54	all gone 2nd week Oct. local migration to foothill
<i>Oriolus oriolus</i> Golden Oriole.	mid April	first week September
<i>Sturnus malabaricus</i> Greyheaded Mynah.	mid March	gone by first week November
<i>Hirundo rustica</i> Common Swallow.	mid February	most gone by end August
<i>Apus affinis</i> House Swift.	29-2-48, 25-2-52, 12-2-54 these records are for birds flying high almost out of sight. They do not appear flying round the houses till the 11th — 12th March	mid October

SUMMER VISITORS—(contd.)

Species of bird	First dates	Last dates
<i>Turdus unicolor</i> Tickell's Thrush	April	end October
<i>Phylloscopus reguloides</i> Crowned Willow-Warbler.	mid March	mid September
<i>Passer rutilans</i> Cinnamon Sparrow.	Seen only rarely March to September	
<i>Passer domesticus</i> House Sparrow.	early March but most in April	August
<i>Nectarinia asiatica</i> Purple Sunbird.	1-6-48, 1-6-51, 2-6-52, 1-6-53 I do find it astonishing that this bird should arrive year after year on almost exactly the same day	mid November
<i>Dicaeum concolor</i> Plaincoloured Flower-pecker.	mid March	end September
<i>D. agile</i> Thickbilled Flower-pecker.	end June	mid October

WINTER VISITORS

Species of bird	First dates	Last dates
<i>Luscinia svecica</i> Bluethroat.	September 14-9-53	End April 30-4-54
<i>Phoenicurus frontalis</i> Bluefronted Redstart.	end October	22-3-54
<i>P. hodgsoni</i> Hodgson's Redstart.	late October	mid March
<i>P. leucocephala</i> Whitecapped Redstart.	mid October	April 12th
<i>Tarsiger chrysaeus</i> Golden Bush Robin.	end October not common till November	March 22nd
<i>Tarsiger cyanurus</i> Redflanked Bush Robin.	mid October	March 24th in Valley April 12th on hills
<i>Adelura coeruleocephala</i> Blueheaded Robin.	early November	end February

WINTER VISITORS—(contd.)

Species of bird	First dates	Last dates
<i>Turdus ruficollis</i> Blackthroated Thrush.	mid November	April 25th
<i>Zoothera dauma</i> Smallbilled Mountain Thrush.	25-9-53	early May
<i>Muscicapa parva</i> Redbreasted Flycatcher.	23-9-48, 25-9-53	27-4-53; all gone by first week May; one 11th May 54.
<i>M. strophciata</i> Orangeorgetted Flycatcher.	mid November	mid April
<i>M. amabilis</i> Rustybreasted Flycatcher.	December	end March
<i>Rhipidura hypoxantha</i> Yellowbellied Fantail Flycatcher.	20th November	end March. This year I observed a migration taking place, there were at least 25 of these birds flying north along the Gandak-Kosi watershed at 8,000 ft. April 5th.
<i>Lanius tephronotus</i> Greybacked Shrike.	end October	end April-early May
<i>Lanius cristatus</i> Brown Shrike.	24th September	11th May
<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> Chiff-chiff.	end November	end March
<i>Acrocephalus dumetorum</i> Blyth's Reed Warbler.	3rd October	11th May
<i>Seiærcus burkii</i> Blackbrowed Flycatcher-Warbler.	7th September	April 6th
<i>Oriolus chinensis</i> Blacknaped Oriole.	Seen January only	...
<i>Pyrrhula nipalensis</i> Brown Bullfinch.	middle to end September	early May
<i>Spinus tibetanus</i> Tibetan Siskin.	end November	end March from Valley later on hills

WINTER VISITORS

Species of bird	First dates	Last dates
<i>Carpodacus rodochroa</i> Pinkbrowed Rosefinch.	?	mid April
<i>Carpodacus nipalensis</i> Nepal Rosefinch.	late November often December.	end March
<i>Emberiza pusilla</i> Little Bunting.	November	early April
<i>E. aureola</i> Yellowbreasted Bunting.	end November	end April, sometimes May
<i>Alauda gulgula</i> Kashmir Skylark.	10th October	21st April
<i>Motacilla alba</i> White Wagtail.	13-9- (<i>leucopsis</i>)	May 6th (<i>dukhunensis</i>)
<i>M. cinerea</i> Grey Wagtail.	13th October	May 10th
<i>M. flava</i> Greyheaded Wagtail.	19th September	May 4th
<i>M. citreola</i> Yellowheaded Wagtail.	6th September	end April
<i>Anthus hodgsoni</i> Hodgson's Pipit.	14th September	4th May
<i>A. richardi</i> Richard's pipit.	19th September	?
<i>A. roseatus</i> Rescate Pipit	7th October	May 3rd
<i>Pachyglossa melano-</i> <i>zantha</i> . Yellowbellied Flower- pecker.	Only December to February.	...
<i>Psittacula himalayana</i> Slatyheaded Parroquet.	December	end March
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i> Osprey.	14th September	March
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> Golden Eagle.	December to February only.	...
<i>A. heliaca</i> Imperial Eagle.	December to March	...
<i>A. nipalensis</i> Steppe Eagle.	end November to end March.	...
<i>Circus aeruginosus</i> Marsh Harrier.	5-9-48, 6-9-52, 6-9-53	April

WINTER VISITORS—(contd.)

Species of bird	First dates	Last dates
<i>Buteo</i> sp ?	October 8th	mid April
<i>Falco peregrinus calidus</i> . Peregrine.	16th September	18th April
<i>F. tinnunculus</i> Kestrel.	20th September	Usually 3rd week April occasional 11th May.
<i>Accipiter nisus</i> Asiatic Sparrowhawk.	14th October	March
<i>Tringa ochropus</i> Green Sandpiper.	17-8-48, 10-8-53	about second week May
<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> Common Sandpiper.	8-8-48, 8-8-53	first fortnight May
<i>Erolia temminckii</i> Temminck's Stint.	about 8th September	17th May
<i>Scolopax rusticola</i> Woodcock.	mid October	early March when often in our garden on migra- tion
Snipe (Fantail and Pin- tail.	about 4th September	early May

PASSAGE MIGRANTS

Species of bird	Autumn	Spring
<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i> Black Redstart.	?	Between 12th and 20th April
<i>Phylloscopus affinis</i> Tickell's Willow-Warbler.	September	early March to April 25th
<i>P. trochiloides viridanus</i>	mid September to early November	early March to May 20th
<i>P. nitidus</i> Green Willow-Warbler.	not in autumn	last week March to 1st week May, mostly second half April
<i>Carpodacus erythrinus</i> Common Rosefinch.	scarcely any in autumn	mid March to mid May
<i>lynx torquilla</i> Wryneck.	September-October	April mostly
<i>Sterna hirundo tibetana</i> Common Tern.	August-September	not in spring
<i>Numenius arquata</i> Curlew.	August	
<i>Tringa glareola</i> Wood Sandpiper.	September	mid April to mid May
<i>Tringa nebularia</i> Greenshank.	mid August-end September	
<i>Philomachus pugnax</i> Ruff.	mid September	
<i>Anas querquedula</i> Garganey.	all September-mid October	